

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Claims 4, 26-28, 32, 46 and 52-54 have been amended without adding new matter, and claims 1-3, 29-31, 44, 45, 50 and 51 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 4-28, 32-43, 46-49 and 52-54 remain pending. The remarks below in connection with claim rejections refer to the claims as amended herein.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 29-35, 37-40 and 44-49 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,706,224 to Srinivasan et al. ("Srinivasan").

Applicant has canceled claims 29-31 and 44-45 as being more properly submitted in a related application and without acquiescence to the section 102 rejection, and thus submits that rejection of those claims is moot.

Applicant has rewritten claim 32 in independent form to include the limitations of claims 29 and 31 so that claim 32 recites, in part:

determining a first block priority number from a first plurality of priority numbers where each of the first plurality of priority numbers are associated with data stored in a first data classification block (DCB) that matches a search key;

determining a second block priority number from a second plurality of priority numbers where each of the second plurality of priority numbers are associated with data stored in a second data classification block (DCB) that matches the search key;

determining a most significant block priority number (MSBPN) from the first block priority number and the second block priority number

Srinivasan discloses a semiconductor memory device which is partitionable into RAM and CAM subfields and in which transfer gates are used to ensure that potential match signals originating from RAM subfields do not reach a priority encoder (Srinivasan, col. 2, lines 51-64; col. 5, lines 35-43). In contrast to applicant's claim 32, however, Srinivasan does not disclose or suggest priority numbers that are associated with data stored in a data classification block, and instead discloses an entirely different prioritizing scheme in which "the highest priority matched data word is that word with the lowest physical address" (Srinivasan, col. 4, lines 29-42). In

view of this clear distinction, applicant submits that Srinivasan does not anticipate claim 32, nor claims 30-35 and 37-40 which depend from and further limit claim 32.

In the event of disagreement with respect to the foregoing point, applicant respectfully requests that relevant sections of Srinivasan believed to disclose or suggest priority numbers associated with data stored in a data classification block and the other limitations recited above be specifically pointed out or, alternatively, if it is concluded that such limitations are inherent in Srinivasan, that reasons for such conclusion be provided.

Applicant has rewritten claim 46 in independent form to include the limitations of claims 44 and 45 so that claim 46 recites, in part:

means for determining a first block priority number (BPN)
associated with a first data stored in a first data classification block
(DCB) that matches a search key;

means for determining a second BPN associated with a second
data stored in a second data classification block (DCB) that matches the
search key; and

means for determining a most significant block priority number
(MSBPN) from the first BPN and the second BPN

Applicant submits that, at least for the reasons given with respect to claim 32, Srinivasan does not disclose all the limitations of claim 46 and therefore does not anticipate claim 46, nor claims 47-49 which depend from and further limit claim 46.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-26, 28 and 50-54 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Srinivasan in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,914,956 to Williams ("Williams").

Applicant has canceled claims 1-3, 50 and 51 as being more properly submitted in a related application and without acquiescence to the section 103 rejection, and thus submits that rejection of those claims is moot.

Applicant has rewritten claim 4 in independent form to include the limitations of claims 1 and 3 so that claim 4 recites, in part:

a first data classification block (DCB) that outputs a first block
priority number (BPN) associated with a first data stored in the first DCB

that matches a search key

As discussed above in reference to claim 32, Srinivasan does not disclose or suggest priority numbers that are associated with data stored in a data classification block. Accordingly, applicant submits that Srinivasan does not disclose the above-recited limitation.

Williams discloses an ATM switch having a cell router that uses the header and input port identification information to determine a specific entry in a connection table (Williams, col. 3, lines 25-35; col. 5, lines 9-12), but does not disclose or suggest the above-recited limitation. Accordingly, because neither Srinivasan nor Williams discloses the above-recited limitation of claim 4, even if Srinivasan and Williams could be combined as suggested in the Office Action, the combination would still not meet all the limitations of claim 4, nor claims 5-26 and 28 which depend from and further limit claim 4, and therefore would not have rendered claims 4-26 and 28 obvious.

Applicant has rewritten claim 52 in independent form to include the limitations of claims 50 and 51 so that claim 52 recites, in part:

a device index processor coupled to the plurality of priority index tables,
match flag signal generators, and row enable encoder circuits to
determine the index for at least one of the data entries that matches a
search key

Applicant submits that neither Srinivasan nor Williams discloses a plurality of priority index tables, match flag signal generators or row enable encoder circuits, much less a device index processor coupled to the plurality of priority index tables, match flag signal generators, and row enable encoder circuits to determine the index for at least one of the data entries that matches a search key. Accordingly, even if Srinivasan and Williams could be combined in the manner suggested in the Office Action, the combination would still not meet all the limitations of claim 52, nor claims 51-54 which depend from and further limit claim 52, and therefore would not have rendered claims 52-54 obvious.

Claim 27 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Srinivasan in view of Williams and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,557,747 to Rogers et al. ("Rogers"). Applicant respectfully disagrees with this reason for rejection.

As discussed above, even if Srinivasan and Williams could be combined in the manner

suggested in the Office Action, the combination would still fail to meet the following limitation of claim 4, which is incorporated into claim 27 by virtue of its dependency from claim 4:

a first data classification block (DCB) that outputs a first block priority number (BPN) associated with a first data stored in the first DCB that matches a search key

Applicant submits that Rogers does not disclose any of the above limitations and accordingly that, even if Srinivasan, Williams and Rogers could be combined in the manner suggested in the Office Action, the combination would still fail to meet all the limitations of claim 27 and therefore would not have rendered claim 27 obvious.

Claims 36 and 41-43 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Srinivasan. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this reason for rejection.

Claims 36 and 41-43 depend from claim 32 which, as discussed above, includes at least the following limitations that are not disclosed or suggested by Srinivasan:

determining a first block priority number from a first plurality of priority numbers where each of the first plurality of priority numbers are associated with data stored in a first data classification block (DCB) that matches a search key;

determining a second block priority number from a second plurality of priority numbers where each of the second plurality of priority numbers are associated with data stored in a second data classification block (DCB) that matches the search key;

determining a most significant block priority number (MSBPN) from the first block priority number and the second block priority number

Accordingly, for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 32, applicant submits that Srinivasan does not render claims 36 and 41-43 obvious.

Conclusion

Applicant submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. If a telephone interview would be helpful in any way, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

A Petition for a three (3) month extension of time is enclosed herewith.

Authorization is hereby given to charge deposit account 501914 for any fee deficiency in

connection with this Response.

Respectfully submitted,
SHEMWELL MAHAMED I LLP

Date February 16, 2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles E. Shemwell', written over a horizontal line.

Charles E. Shemwell, Reg. No. 40,171
Tel. 408-236-6645